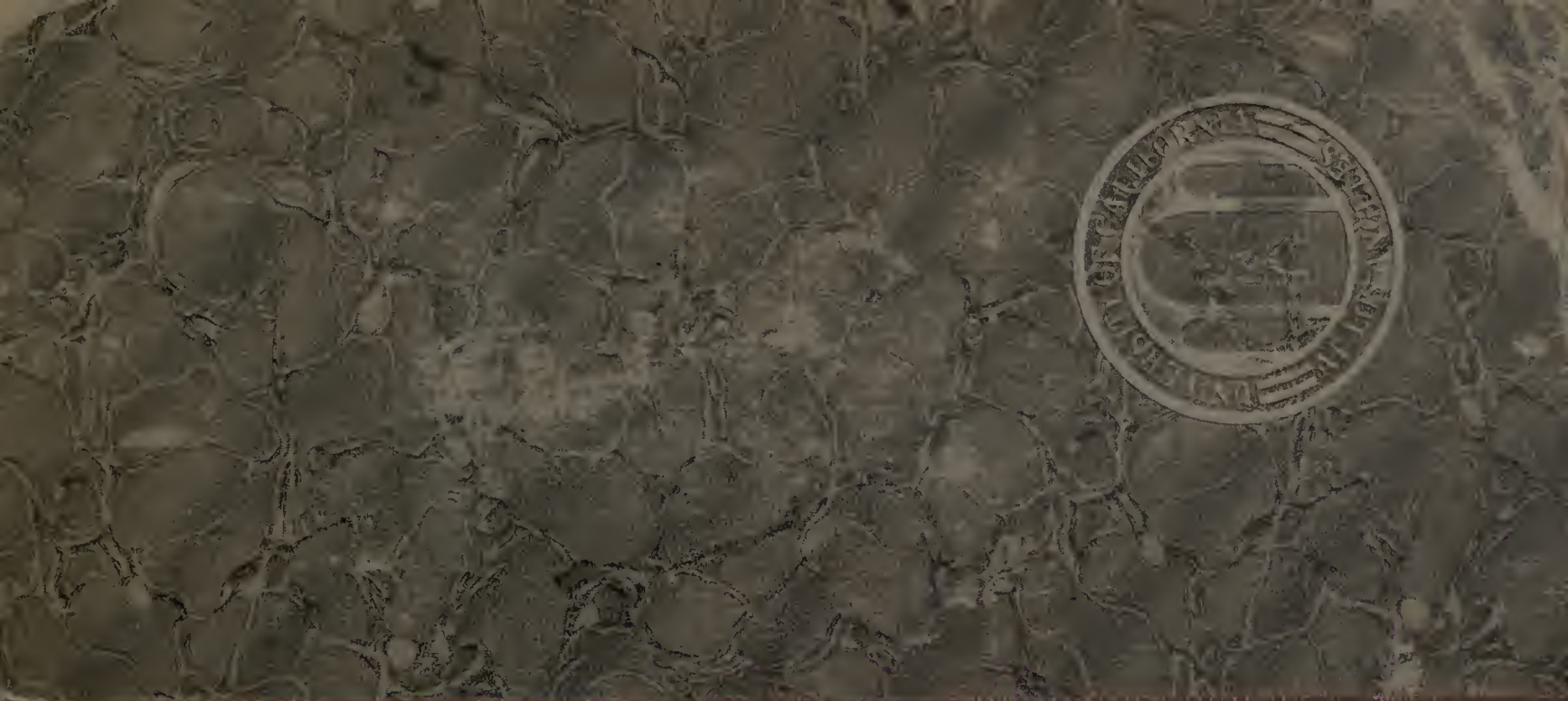

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"MUCK-RAKERS OF OTHER DAYS"

SPEECH OF

HON. JULIUS KAHN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SATURDAY, MARCH 26, 1910

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SPEECH
OF
HON. JULIUS KAHN.

The House being in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and having under consideration the bill (H. R. 23311) making appropriations for the naval service for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1911, and for other purposes—

Mr. KAHN said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Availing myself of the latitude allowed under the rules of the House in general debate when the House is in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, I desire at this time to address myself to the subject of "Muck-rakers of other days." On the 14th of April, 1906, upon the occasion of the laying of the corner stone of the new Office Building of the House of Representatives, President Roosevelt said:

> In Pilgrim's Progress the man with the muck-rake is set forth as the example of him whose vision is fixed on carnal instead of on spiritual things. Yet he also typifies the man who, in this life, consistently refuses to see aught that is lofty and fixes his eyes with solemn intentness only on that which is vile and debasing. Now, it is very necessary that we should not flinch from seeing what is vile and debasing. There is filth on the floor, and it must be scraped up with a muck-rake; and there are times and places where this service is the most needed of all the services that can be performed. But the man who never does anything else, who never thinks or speaks or writes save of his feats with a muck-rake, speedily becomes, not a help to society, not an incitement to good, but one of the most potent forces for evil * * * The liar is no whit better than the thief, and if his mendacity takes the form of slander, he may be worse than most thieves. It puts a premium on knavery untruthfully to attack an honest man, or even with hysterical exaggeration to assail a bad man with untruth. An epidemic of criminal assault upon character does not good, but very great harm. The soul of every scoundrel is gladdened whenever an honest man is assailed, or even when a scoundrel is untruthfully assailed.

After that vigorous protest against indiscriminate attacks upon public officials, so far as some of the newspapers and magazines were concerned, it was hoped that a more moderate tone—a tone rather of criticism than abuse—would mark the course of these periodicals. As a matter of fact, the attacks still continue—possibly a little more virulent, if anything. Fortunately, the large majority of the newspapers and magazines of this country do not attempt to diverge from the path of fair, decent criticism. And I firmly believe that every honest man in public life welcomes that kind of criticism.

But there is another class of newspapers and magazines that descend to vituperation and abuse upon the merest pretext. Possibly it is done to swell the subscription list, for it is a matter of history that the circulation of the Richmond Recorder increased enormously when its editor, Callender, began his onslaughts on Thomas Jefferson. But at any rate these publications all too frequently impugn the motives and malign the character of the object of their attacks; they even endeavor to point the finger of suspicion against the probity and integrity of that particular official that has fallen under their displeasure. So frequently have attacks of this character challenged my attention during the past year that I began to wonder whether the early Presidents, whose names have come down to us as the very embodiment of the highest type of American patriotism and official integrity, were also the subject of such fierce villification and abuse in the periodicals published in their particular day and generation. I had not proceeded far in my investigation ere I found that they, too, had been the victims of muck-rakers. But knowing how their memory is revered by the great majority of our countrymen, I became convinced that these attacks usually have little effect upon posterity.

They are soon forgotten, and the men whose characters are assailed invariably stand out as shining examples in their country's history—shining examples for the youth of the land to follow and emulate. I am reminded of a little inci-

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dent that occurred in the city of Sacramento in 1895 during a session of the California legislature. Maj. Frank McLaughlin, a well-known citizen of our State, was at the capital attending to some matters pending before the legislature. One morning there appeared in one of the San Francisco newspapers an article which reflected somewhat upon the good name and character of an estimable citizen of Oakland, Cal., wherein it was charged that he was gathering a corruption fund in order that he might be able to go to the capitol and defeat certain bills that were then being considered by the committees of the legislature. Indignant at the attack, this citizen wired to Major McLaughlin, as follows:

Brand the article in this morning's paper false as hell! Such tactics will act as a boomerang. I am coming up this evening.

Whereupon Major McLaughlin promptly wired back:

I have looked all over Sacramento, but I can not find a "false as hell" branding iron. I would like to help you propel the boomerang, but I do not know just in which direction to throw it. Keep frappé, old man! To-day's newspapers are lost in starting to-morrow's fires.

[Applause.]

Mr. Chairman, my investigation has led me to recognize the profound philosophy concealed in that last sentence. I soon found that during the first administration of President Washington he had been the subject of more or less attack in the pamphlets and newspapers of that epoch. But it was during his second administration that the muckrakers of that era came out in the open and made him the target of bitter invective and vituperation such as has seldom been equaled in the annals of our country.

As every student of history will recall, after the outbreak of the French Revolution there arose two powerful factions in the United States. One of these, under the leadership of Thomas Jefferson and his followers, strongly espoused the cause of France, especially in her struggle against England and Spain. The other, under the leadership of President Washington, which desired to maintain a strict neutrality, was accused of being pro-English. At any rate, feeling ran high, and it was openly charged that the French party was trying to embroil this country in a war with Great Britain. Some of the debates in the House of Representatives grew exceedingly acrimonious, and on the occasion of Washington's birthday in 1793 the usual resolution to adjourn for half an hour in order that the Congress might pay its respects to the illustrious Chief Executive was, for the first time, opposed, although the motion ultimately carried.

Realizing the necessity for settling the differences that existed between this country and England through diplomatic channels, Washington appointed John Jay, then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, to the position of minister plenipotentiary and envoy extraordinary to the Court of St. James, and the Senate promptly confirmed the appointment. It was then that the muckrakers began to pour out all their vials of wrath upon the head of the Father of his Country. As a matter of fact, some of the scribblers of that era began to assail him by calling him the stepfather of his country. But here are a few samples of the vaporings of the writers of that period:

It has now become a question whether Congress is necessary or of any utility to the country. To cast a retrospective eye at the present session, it would appear as if the $6 a day were more an object of calculation than the interests of the people; to take a view of the Executive's conduct, it would seem as if he considered a legislative body a dead weight upon the Government and was resolved to obstruct its operations by diplomatic appointments. Perhaps it would correspond more with the wishes of the Executive and his satellites if Congress was to adjourn sine die and leave all to them.

* * * * * * *

The President, not content with annihilating the people, wished also to annihilate the obligations of a treaty—the price of our liberties. Faithless, unprincipled, and aristocratical moderatist, who would offer up the liberties of thy fellow-citizens on the altar of administration, and the sacred obligations of our country, though perhaps not thine, on the altar of treachery and dishonor!

* * * * * * *

How long is this to be borne with? How long are we to submit to the exertions of a set of men among us who wish to prostrate us at the feet of Great Britain and barter away everything freemen hold dear? Is there not one propitious gale to kindle the embers of expiring liberty again to consume its conspirators? Disguised moderatists, forbear! Freemen are slow to anger, but when aroused moderation and forbearance may forsake them.

The treaty which Mr. Jay negotiated was known as the Jay-Grenville treaty, or the British treaty of 1794, it having been signed in London on the 19th of

November of that year. The first copy was placed in the hands of President Washington on the evening of March 7, 1795. Its terms seem to have been made public surreptitiously about a week later, and forthwith its friends and its opponents commenced a regular tirade of abuse, the one against the other. Soon after the following notice was printed in Richmond, Va.:

RICHMOND, *July 31.*

Notice is hereby given that in case the treaty entered into by that damned archtraitor, John Jay, with the British tyrant should be ratified a petition will be presented to the next general assembly of Virginia, at their next session, praying that the said State may recede from the Union and be left under the government and protection of 100,000 free and independent Virginians.

P. S.—As it is the wish of the people of the said State to enter into a treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation with any other State or States of the present Union who are averse to returning again under the galling yoke of Great Britain, the printers of the United States are requested to publish the above notification.

John Jay was assailed in this fashion:

Hear the voice of truth, hear and believe! John Jay, ah! the archtraitor—seize him, drown him, hang him, burn him, flay him alive! Men of America, he betrayed you with a kiss! As soon as he set foot on the soil of England he kissed the Queen's hand. He kissed the Queen's hand, and with that kiss betrayed away the rights of man and the liberty of America.

Mr. SHERWOOD. What is that from?

Mr. KAHN. That is from one of the newspapers of that particular period.

Mr. SHERWOOD. You do not know which one it was?

Mr. KAHN. I do not. But I will say to my friend that this extract and all the others which I shall read may be found in certain histories, biographies, memoirs, and pamphlets which I found in the Congressional Library.

But when it became known that the President had signed the treaty, there was a perfect torrent of vindictive abuse that flowed from the pens of the partisan journalists and pamphleteers of that day and generation. The Aurora, one of the most rabid of the newspapers of that period, declared:

The President has violated the Constitution. He has made a treaty with a nation that is the abhorrence of our people. He has treated our remonstrances with pointed contempt. Louis XVI, in the meridian of his splendor and his power, never dared to heap such insults upon his subjects. The answers to the respectful remonstrances of Boston and Philadelphia and New York sound like the omnipotent director of a seraglio. * * * As he has been disrespectful to his people, let him no longer expect them to view him as a saint.

One writer, who signed himself "A Calm Observer," in publicly accusing Washington of being a thief for having drawn from the Treasury for his private use more than the salary annexed to his office, asked:

What will posterity say of the man who has done this thing? Will it not say that the mask of political hypocrisy has been worn by Cæsar, by Cromwell, and by Washington alike?

Another, who styled himself "Pittachus," wrote:

Happily the public mind is rapidly changing. Hitherto the name of Washington has been fatal to the popularity of every man against whom it was directed. Now it is as harmless as John O'Nooke or Tam O'Stiles. To be an opposer of the President will soon be a passport to popular favor.

One who assumed the nom de plume of Valerius attacked him because—

he no longer indulges in the manly walk, nor rides the generous steed; he no longer continues such exercise. He receives visits and returns none. Are these republican virtues? Do they command our esteem?—

he sententiously demanded.

From this time on till his retirement from the Presidency the attacks became more and more vitriolic. In reviewing these tirades against our first President a writer of a little later period said that his antagonists—

threw aside all reserve * * * and under the abused name of the liberty of the press assaulted his fame with a virulence not inferior to that with which they could have attacked the meanest defaulter. His military, his civil, his political, his private domestic character were all arraigned, and he was asserted to be destitute of merit, either as a man or as a soldier. * * * Having once made the charge of peculation against Washington, the imposters stood their ground and undertook to support it by extracts said to be taken from the Treasury accounts. The Secretary of the Treasury testified that the appropriations made by the legislature had never been exceeded. Still the charge was repeated with an effrontery which passed with some for the firmness of conscious rectitude.

To endeavor to prove that the writer of those lines did not overstep the bounds of truth when he characterized the attacks on President Washington in such forceful language, I will, as I proceed, quote a few extracts from the news-

papers and pamphlets that were issued toward the closing days of his administration. The Aurora, of March 23, 1796, printed this:

If ever a nation was debauched by a man, the American Nation has been debauched by Washington. If ever a nation has been deceived by a man, the American Nation has been deceived by Washington. Let his conduct, then, be an example to future ages; let it serve to be a warning that no man may be an idol; let the history of the Federal Government instruct mankind that the mask of patriotism may be worn to conceal the foulest designs against the liberty of the people.

What will posterity say of the man who has done this thing? Will it not say that the mask of political hypocrisy has been worn by Cæsar, by Cromwell, and by Washington alike?

It seems almost incredible that in the days of President Washington such language could have been printed in any newspaper in this fair land. [Applause.] But the President resented this kind of attack. How could he do otherwise? How could any man, who had at heart the love of his country that our first great President had, do otherwise? How could any man of his patriotic nature have remained silent under such abuse? And so he wrote a letter to his friend, Governor Lee, of Virginia, and I commend to this committee the language of that letter, for it well may be taken as an excellent model of remonstrance against the vile attacks that are being made upon public men in our own day. The President said:

That there are in this, as in all other countries, discontented characters I well know, as also that these characters are actuated by very different views. Some good, from the opinion that the measures of the General Government are impure; some bad and (if I might be allowed to use so harsh an expression) diabolical, inasmuch as they are not only meant to impede the measures of government generally, but more especially to destroy the confidence which it is necessary the people should place (until they have unequivocal proof of demerit) in their servants, for in this light I consider myself whilst I am an occupant of office; and if they were to go further and call me their slave during this period I would not dispute the point with them. But in what will this abuse terminate?

For the result, as it respects myself, I care not. I have a consolation within me of which no earthly efforts can deprive me, and that is that neither ambition nor interested motives have influenced my conduct. The arrows of malevolence, however barbed and pointed, can never reach my most valuable part; though, whilst I am up as a mark, they will be continually aimed at me. The publications in Freneau's and Bache's papers are outrages on common decency, and they progress in that style in proportion as their pieces are treated with contempt and passed over in silence by those against whom they are directed. Their tendency, however, is too obvious to be mistaken by men of cool and dispassionate minds and, in my opinion, ought to alarm them, because it is difficult to prescribe bounds to their effect.

Every American is proud of this city of Washington, with its superb Capitol and its modest but architecturally beautiful White House. The construction of these buildings was authorized and commenced during the administration of President Washington. Hark, now, to this extract from one of the publications of that period:

Ninety-seven thousand dollars have gone into the President's house and as much more is wanted. Eighty thousand dollars spent upon the Capitol and the building scarcely above the foundation walls. [Laughter.] And this wastefulness is encouraged by a Government that can not raise money to pay the interest on the debts it is each year contracting.

Has not that a familiar ring to it? But who, to-day, begrudges a single dollar that was expended upon either building?

Some of the charges of theft were summed up in this fashion:

General Washington went to the Treasury—some future President may go to the bank—the one step will not be a jot worse than the other.

* * * * * * *

If truth or reason or the public debt had been at all consulted the House would have begun by asking the Executive why he took from the Treasury $1,100,000 without their leave and in contempt of the Constitution.

The fact that Washington, as a general rule, treated these calumnies with disdainful silence was construed by his enemies as a confession of their truth. But that the attacks sank deep and embittered the life of our first Chief Executive is evidenced by this extract from a letter written to Thomas Jefferson:

To this I may add, and very truly, that until the last year or two I had no conception that parties would, or even could, go to the lengths I have been witness to; nor did I believe until lately it was within the bounds of probability—hardly within those of possibility—that while I was using my utmost exertions to establish a national character of our own, independent, as far as our obligations and justice would permit, of every nation of the earth, and wished, by steering a steady course, to preserve this country from the horrors of a desolating war, I should be accused of being the enemy of our Nation and subject to the influence of another, and to prove it that every act of my administration would be tortured and the grossest and most insidious misrepresentations of them be

made by giving one side only of a subject, and that, too, in *such exaggerated and indecent terms as could scarcely be applied to a Nero, to a notorious defaulter, or even to a common pickpocket.*

In the letter to Governor Lee and also in the letter to Jefferson, of which the foregoing is but an extract, Washington referred to a notorious muck-raker of that day whose name was Benjamin Franklin Bache. He was a grandson of Benjamin Franklin, had political aspirations, but failed to receive a coveted appointment from the President. He forthwith became a sorehead, and in season as well as out of season this blackguard hurled his miserable abuse at the then Executive. As early as 1777 a cabal had been organized against General Washington when he was Commander in Chief of the Continental Army. In order to destroy his influence in that army and to poison the public mind, a number of forged letters were cunningly devised, so as to arouse a suspicion of his fidelity to the American cause. They were intended to convey the impression that he was attached to the cause of England.

In order to spread a belief in such an act of treachery, the conspirators circulated a story that these letters had been captured from Washington's mulatto boy near Fort Lee. They were shown to be rank forgeries at the time the story was first circulated, but this muck-raker Bache now reprinted them as being absolutely genuine. I doubt whether we can find anywhere a more nefarious instance of bitter, vindictive partisanship. Other opponents of Washington reprinted the story, and it spread so rapidly and was repeated so persistently that at the very end of his administration, on the day of his retirement from the Presidency, Washington felt compelled to write a denial of the genuineness of the forged letters, and requested that this denial be placed among the archives of the Department of State, in order that future generations might not be deceived by the wicked designs of his enemies. It is but proper that I quote a portion of that statement at this time:

At the time when these letters first appeared it was notorious to the army immediately under my command, and particularly to the gentlemen attached to my person, that my mulatto man, Billy, had never been one moment in the power of the enemy. It is also a fact that no part of my baggage or any of my attendants were captured during the whole course of the war. These well-known facts made it unnecessary during the war to call the public attention to the forgery by any express declaration of mine, and a firm reliance on my fellow-citizens, and the abundant proofs they gave me of their confidence in me, rendered it alike unnecessary to take any formal notice of the revival of the imposition during my civil administration. But as I can not know how soon a more serious event (referring, of course, to the probability of his early death) may succeed to that which will this day take place, I have thought it a duty that I owed to myself, to my country, and to truth, now to detail the circumstances above recited, and to add my solemn declaration that the letters herein described are a base forgery, and that I never saw or heard of them till they appeared in print. The present letter I commit to your care and desire it may be deposited in the office of the Department of State as a testimony of the truth to the present generation and to posterity.

It almost passes belief that George Washington, the President of the United States, should have felt himself constrained to place among the public records of his country, in order that future muck-rakers might not revive the stories, this effective denial of the truth of assertions contained in the papers of his day and generation. [Applause.]

And, oh! what a pæan of rejoicing arose from these muck-rakers when our first President relinquished the reins of government. Listen to this from the Aurora:

"Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation," was the pious ejaculation of a man who beheld a flood of happiness rushing in upon mankind. If ever there was a time which would justify the reiteration of that exclamation, the time is now arrived: *For the man who is the source of all the misfortunes of our country is this day reduced to a level with his fellow-citizens, and is no longer possessed of power to multiply evils upon the United States.* If ever there was a period for rejoicing this is the moment. Every heart in unison with the freedom and happiness of the people ought to beat high with exultation that the *name of Washington from this day ceases to give a currency to political iniquity, and to legalize corruption.* A new era is now opening upon us, a new era which promises much to the people; for public measures must now stand upon their own merits, and *nefarious projects can no more be supported by a name.* When a retrospection is taken of the Washington administration for eight years past, it is a subject of the greatest astonishment that a single individual should have canceled the principles of republicanism in an enlightened people, just emerged from the gulf of despotism, and should have carried his designs against the public liberty so far as to have put in jeopardy its very existence. Such, however, are the facts, and with these staring us in the face, this day ought to be a jubilee in the United States.

And this from the New York Daily Gazette:

Now should the people rejoice exceedingly and let their hearts be glad, for now is the source of all misfortune brought down to the level of his fellow-men. Now will political iniquity cease to be legalized by a name.

Here is still another ebullition:

After bringing the country to the very brink of ruin, Washington has fled from the gathering storm. Having run the ship between rocks and shoals, he has abandoned the helm and left the vessel to her fate.

But the muck-rakers did not cease their attacks even after the retirement of the President and the inauguration of his successor. He had been accused of almost every imaginable offense, but on the 11th of March, 1797, he was actually accused of murder in a letter of the "Vox Populi" sort, which was published in the Aurora of that date. It is so vicious and so insidious that I am inclined to the belief that the writer, who signed himself "T. T. L.," must have been the progenitor of "A Citizen," "Justice," and the whole brood of literary hacks who seek to cover the vile emanations from their scurrilous pens with that kind of anonymity. Let me read it to you:

Mr. BACHE: I saw in your last number a letter signed "George Washington," solemnly denying the authenticity of certain private letters dated in 1776 and ascribed to him. For the honor of this country I sincerely rejoice that those letters were not genuine; but I must say that I think Mr. Washington blamable for not having earlier noticed the forgery. I own, for one, that his long silence produced in my mind disagreeable doubts—others have felt them—and I can not but think that as a servant of the public it was his duty immediately to have removed such doubts, since it was in his power to do it so readily. His personal pride should have been overcome for the sake of his public duty.

The necessity of public confidence being attached to officers in important stations, especially in a Government like ours, should have pointed out early to him the necessity, however disagreeable the task to his personal feelings, of stepping forward with a public denial of the unworthy sentiments attributed to him in those spurious letters. Since he prevailed upon himself to break the ice, there is another subject on which the public mind, I think, should receive some light. I have not known it lately to be a matter of public discussion, but it has been frequently brought forward in private conversations, and I never could find anyone capable of giving a satisfactory explanation, and probably from the old date of this transaction (1754) Mr. Washington may be the only person capable of giving an eclaircissement.

The accusation in question is no less than having, while commanding a party of American troops, fired on a flag of truce, killed the officer in the act of reading a summons under the sanction of such a flag, of having attempted to vindicate the act, and yet of having signed a capitulation in which the killing of that officer and his men was acknowledged as an act of assassination.

The charge is of too serious a nature, firing on a flag of truce is so unprecedented an act, even in savage warfare, and signing an acknowledgment of having been guilty of assassination so degrading to a man, and especially to a military man, that I feel confident there must have been some egregious misstatement in the account given of the business. I have imagined this also must be some forgery, or that Maj. George Washington, who was taken at Fort Necessity in 1754, could not be the same person as George Washington, late President of the United States.

The transaction alluded to is recorded in a pamphlet published here in the year 1757, purporting to be the translation of a memorial containing a summary view of facts, with their authorities, in answer to the observations sent by the English ministry to the courts of Europe.

Mr. Washington can settle every doubt upon this subject by declaring whether this memorial was a forgery, whether the journal it contains, purporting to be his journal, and especially the capitulation, acknowledging the killing of Mr. Jurnonville and his men to have been an act of assassination, were papers forged to answer the purposes of the French court, or whether he is the Major Washington there alluded to.

T. T. L.

Of course the sole purpose of such slander was to embitter the declining years of Washington. Although the incident referred to had occurred some forty-three years earlier, Washington had kept a journal of the military expeditions to which he had been attached as a major of militia, and one paragraph of that journal will suffice to show how malicious was the attack on the ex-President. Washington had written:

They say they called to us as soon as they discovered us, which is an absolute falsehood, for I was then marching at the head of the company, going toward them, and can positively affirm that when they first saw us they ran to their arms without calling, as I must have heard them had they done so.

The journal gives a complete account of the entire affair, and the muck-raking newspapers did not long dwell upon the incident.

But perhaps the most bitter attack that was made upon Washington was that of Thomas Paine. He had been a stanch supporter of the Federal Constitution and of President Washington, and had frequently taken occasion to exalt them both, not only in speech, but also in writing. You will recall that he dedicated the first part of his Rights of Man to General Washington, and in that dedication addressed him thus:

SIR: I present you a small treatise in defense of those principles of freedom which your exemplary virtue has so eminently contributed to establish. That the Rights of Man may become as universal as your benevolence can wish, and that you may enjoy the happiness of seeing the New World regenerate the Old, is the prayer of

Your most obliged, etc.,

T. PAINE.

In the second part of the Rights of Man he eulogized Washington as follows:

I presume that no man in his sober senses will compare the character of any of the kings of Europe with that of Washington.

As soon as nine States had concurred (and the rest followed in the order that their conventions were elected) the old fabric of the Federal Government was taken down and the new one erected, of which *General Washington* is President. In this place I can not help remarking that the *character and services of this gentleman are sufficient to put all those men called kings to shame.* While they are receiving from the sweat and labors of mankind a prodigality of pay, to which neither their abilities nor their services can entitle them, *he is rendering every service in his power and refusing every pecuniary reward.* He accepted no pay as commander in chief—he accepts none as President of the United States.

He wrote to the Abbe Raynall and extolled the wisdom, the greatness, and especially the military genius of Washington. During all these years he was a fulsome admirer of our first President. While in France he became a member of the National Assembly at the time of the French revolution, and was one of the committee that sentenced Louis XVI to be beheaded. Later on he quarreled with Robespierre, who promptly had him thrown into a dungeon. He frantically appealed to Washington to take him out of durance vile, and because the President did not move expeditiously enough to suit Mr. Paine in the matter—and it is but fair to state that the President felt that Paine was entirely responsible for his unfortunate predicament, and that having expatriated himself and become a citizen of France, this Government was not justified in interfering in his behalf—the erratic Thomas penned a villainous letter to the President, which, as a fair example of muck-rake literature, has few equals in the English language. I shall not dwell upon the parts in which he roundly denounced the Federal Constitution, that instrument that he had so richly extolled before, but I will read to you a few paragraphs from this miserable screed, which, of course, was given generous circulation by that portion of the press that still continued hostile to Washington and his friends:

When we speak of military character, something more is understood than constancy, and something more ought to be understood than the Fabian system of *doing nothing.* The *nothing* part can be done by anybody. Old Mrs. Thompson, the housekeeper of headquarters, who threatened to make the sun and the wind shine through Rivington, of New York, could have done it as well as Mr. Washington. Deborah would have been as good as Barak. The successful skirmishes at the close of one campaign, matters that would scarcely be noticed in a better state of things, make the brilliant exploits of General Washington's seven campaigns. *No wonder we see so much pusillanimity in the President when we see* so little enterprise in the General.

* * * * * * *

Elevated to the chair of the presidency, you assumed the merit of everything to yourself, and the *natural ingratitude* of your constitution began to appear. You commenced your presidential career by encouraging and swallowing the grossest adulation, and you traveled America from one end to the other to put yourself in the way of receiving it.

* * * * * * *

You have as many addresses in your chest as James II. Monopolies of every kind marked *your administration almost in the moment of its commencement.* The lands obtained in the Revolution were lavished upon partisans; the interest of the disbanded soldier was sold to the speculator; *injustice was acted under the pretense of faith, and the chief of the army became the patron of the fraud.*

* * * * * * *

And as to you, sir, treacherous in private friendship and a hypocrite in public life, the world will be puzzled to decide whether you are an apostate or an impostor; whether you have abandoned good principles or whether you ever had any.

But to my mind Paine's change of front is not unlike that of some of the muck-rake sheets of the present era. Have not we all seen men high in public life extolled day after day and week after week in these muck-raking sheets or magazines, so long as they were willing to take the programme of the muck-raker? And have not we all seen these same muck-rakers bespatter the same men with their vile slanders, their infamous abuse, simply because the victims had the nerve and the courage to follow the paths of duty according to their own light and the dictates of their consciences? [Applause.]

There was another "muck-raker." of that period, to whom I will give but passing attention at present. I will tell you more about him a little later on. His name was Callender; and up to the time of Washington's death this infamous wretch never lost an opportunity of vindictively attacking the former Chief Magistrate. He frequently accused the latter of walking through the Constitution, through the privileges of the legislature, and through the respective duties of his office.

Of Washington's military ability he wrote:

He was at the head of an army for seven years and a half and was several times beaten—his fame as a conqueror rests on the capture of 900 Hessians.

In a pamphlet entitled "The Prospect Before Us" he said of Washington and the now famous farewell address:

By his own account, Mr. Washington was twice a traitor—he first renounced the King of England, and thereafter the old confederation. His farewell paper contains a variety of mischievous sentiments.

[Laughter.]

These attacks embittered Washington's declining years; but they were soon forgotten, for when the great patriot's eyes were closed in everlasting sleep on December 14, 1799, the whole world was ready to acknowledge the truth of Lee's immortal tribute, "First in peace, first in war, first in the hearts of his countrymen." [Applause.] The muck-rakers who assailed him have gone to forgotten graves. Who notes or cares what vile slanders they published of him? His name will live, a beacon light in the world's history, and his fame will never die while the world shall endure. [Applause.]

During the administration of John Adams, the Federalist press and the Democratic press vied with each other in printing abuse of the adherents of the opposing political parties. The President was constantly assailed by the Democratic muck-rakers of that day. I shall not dwell at any length upon the articles that the delver into the contemporaneous newspaper literature of that period will bring to light, but I will content myself with quoting just a few excerpts from "The Prospect Before us," which was said to have been written and published by Callender while the latter was undergoing sentence in the Richmond (Va.) jail, having been convicted under the sedition laws that had been passed during the Adams administration.

He delighted to refer to President Adams as "a hoary traitor," and charged him with having "only completed the scene of ignominy which Mr. Washington had begun." Here is a fair sample of the mud with which he bespattered the then President of the United States:

In the summer of 1798 it was understood that Mr. Adams had remarked a resemblance of character between himself and the great and immortal Frederick of Prussia. This will not seem incredible when we call to mind what is positively true, that Mr. Adams, in a fit of passion, has twirled off his wig, and stamped upon it. I should, upon all common occasions, abhor the smallest reference to personalities like this. But it must be remembered that our American Frederick has placed himself at the head of a whole battalion of the trumpeters of personal slander, and that an honest traveler may, with justice, knock down a footpad with the butt end of the robber's own pistol. It is not so well known, as it should be, that this federal gem, this apostle of the parsons of Connecticut, is not only a repulsive pedant, a gross hypocrite, and an unprincipled opressor, but that he is, in private life, one of the most egregious fools upon the continent. When some future Clarendon shall illustrate and dignify the annals of the present age, he will assuredly express his surprise at the abrupt and absurd elevation of this despicable attorney. He will inquire by what species of madness America submitted to accept, as her President, a person without abilities and without virtues; a being alike incapable of attracting either tenderness or esteem.

The historian will search for those occult causes that induced her to exalt an individual who has neither that innocence of sensibility which incites us to love nor that omnipotence of intellect which commands us to admire. He will ask why the United States degraded themselves to the choice of a wretch whose soul came blasted from the hand of nature, of a wretch that has neither the science of a magistrate, the politeness of a courtier, nor the courage of a man. * * *

In his correspondence with England John was, to the degree, tame, pusillanimous, and contemptible, while toward France he was insolent, inconsistent, and quarrelsome to an extreme, which demonstrates a partial derangement of his pericranium. * * *

But in order to give the President full justice we must recollect that the perfidy and imposture of his kidneys have a correspondent proportion to the crack in his upper story; that, as Dryden says, "every inch which is not fool is rogue;" that the now blasted tyrant of America, that ruffian who stigmatized the governor of Virginia as a minister recalled in disgrace, is supereminently entitled not only to the laughter but likewise to the curses of mankind.

Mr. Chairman, I am rather inclined to believe that our friends on the other side of the Chamber, our ancient enemy, the Democrats, are counting upon the present-day muck-rakers to help them sweep the country in the fall campaign. Indeed, I have seen quotations from several speeches of the distinguished leader of the minority upon this floor, wherein he confidently predicts the election of a Democratic House. But then the distinguished gentleman, my good friend from Missouri [Mr. CLARK], is rather given to the indulgence of that figure of speech known as hyperbole. I think he indulged in hyperbole when he stated in this House that "the greatest calamity that ever befell the human race since the fall of Adam was the second election of Grover Cleveland." [Laughter on the Republican side.] I do not think the country agreed with him then, and I do not think the country is taking him seriously now, when he predicts a Democratic House for the Sixty-second Congress. But I want to emphasize this fact,

that the muck-rakers may make the people wobble a little now and then, but they generally wobble back again at election time when they shall have learned the truth through the public discussion of great public questions. That this is absolutely true is amply demonstrated in the life of that patron saint of Democracy, Thomas Jefferson.

In the campaign of 1800 the Federalists charged that Jefferson—

had obtained his property by fraud and robbery; that in one instance he had defrauded and robbed a widow and fatherless children of an estate to which he was executor, of £10,000, by keeping the property and paying them money at the nominal rate when it was worth more than forty to one.

That this attack was earnestly resented is evidenced by a letter he wrote to a friend, in which he said:

I never was executor but in two instances, both of which having taken place about the beginning of the revolution, which withdrew me immediately from all private pursuits, I never meddled in either executorship. In one of the cases only were there a widow and children. She was my sister. She retained and managed the estate in her own hands, and no part of it ever was in mine. In the other, I was a copartner and only received, on a division, the equal portion allotted me. Again, my property is all patrimonial, except about seven or eight hundred pounds worth of lands, purchased by myself and paid for, not to widows and orphans, but to the very gentlemen from whom I purchased.

But he was so fearful of a newspaper controversy that he added:

I only pray that my letter may not go out of your hands, lest it should get into the newspapers, a bear-garden scene into which I have made it a point to enter on no provocation.

[Laughter.]

And there is not wanting other evidence that Jefferson was rather afraid of the muck-rakers of his day. He was a firm believer in freedom of speech, freedom of thought, and freedom of the press, but the viciousness of the newspaper attacks which were made upon him all through his administration so exasperated him that he actually advocated the appointment of government censors. In a letter to President Washington he wrote the following:

No government ought to be without censors, and where the press is free no one else ever will be.

[Laughter.]

On one occasion he remarked to a friend:

There is nothing true in the newspapers except the advertisements.

[Laughter.]

But I am inclined to think that many of those who have felt the sting of newspaper vituperation will not be willing even to subscribe to the doctrine that the advertisements are true. [Laughter.]

Nor were the journalists and the pamphleteers alone in this onslaught on the great Republican. A prominent Connecticut clergyman, in a campaign pamphlet, charges him with gross immorality and dishonesty. The Rev. John M. Mason, in a pamphlet which he called "The Voice of Warning to Christians," said:

I dread the election of Mr. Jefferson because I believe him to be a confirmed infidel. * * * Christians! Lay these things together, compare them, examine them separately and collectively; ponder, pause, lay your hands upon your hearts, lift up your hearts to Heaven and pronounce on Mr. Jefferson's Christianity. You can not stifle your emotions not forbear uttering your indignant sentence—infidel!

Parton, in his Life of Jefferson, is so indignant at the clergy of New England that he says they—

continued to revile the greatest Christian America had produced in terms surpassing in violence those which the clergy of Palestine applied to the founder of Christianity.

"He is an atheist," Dr. David Osgood, of Massachusetts, remarked, and "no better than the 'race of demons' to whose service he has been devoted." [Laughter.]

Young Edward Payson, of Portland, signalized his entrance into public life by delivering a Fourth of July oration, in which he observed that Jefferson, Madison, Gallatin, and their colleagues were men of a character so vile that "the most malicious ingenuity can invent nothing worse than the truth."

Ah, my Democratic friends, have you read anything more severe in the muck-rake periodicals of to-day concerning our own present Chief Executive, the distinguished occupant of the White House, William Howard Taft? I think not. [Applause on the Republican side.]

But the worst offender of all was the man Callender, of whom I have already spoken. He had been convicted of sedition during the latter part of President John Adams's administration, and had been sentenced to pay a fine of $200 and to serve a term of imprisonment in the jail at Richmond, Va. It was while he was incarcerated there that he wrote the pamphlet, "The Prospect Before Us." When Jefferson became President he promptly remitted the fine and pardoned this muck-raker. Almost immediately thereafter Callender made a demand upon Jefferson for the appointment to the postmastership at Richmond. Jefferson, to his great credit, refused to make the appointment. And then, as in the case when Paine attacked Washington, this miserable creature dipped his quill into gall and wormwood and day after day served his readers with the vilest abuse of the first President elected by the Democratic party.

He became the editor of the Richmond Recorder, and "filled that paper with countless stories, partly his own and partly gossip gathered among overseers and scandal mongers. The sheet, hitherto a petty local publication, now found subscribers in the remotest sections of the country; for Callender's characteristic onslaught was of the most ignoble, but certainly of the most effective kind. He charged Jefferson with having been his friend and financial assistant and his confederate in the libels on Washington; but his chief topic was Jefferson's private life, and his many tales were scandalous and revolting to the last degree."

He charged Jefferson, among other things—

with having a family of negro children by a slave woman named Sally; with having been turned out of the house of a certain Major Walker for writing a secret love letter to his wife; and with having swindled his creditors by paying debts in worthless currency. * * *

All these charges were welcomed by the Federalist press, reprinted even in the New York Evening Post [laughter], and scattered broadcast over New England.

It is stated that—

Every Federalist writer hastened to draw for his own use bucketful after bucketful from Callender's foul reservoir; and that the gossip about Jefferson's graceless debaucheries was sent into every household in the United States.

To be sure, such villainous abuse wears itself out in time; but, alas, too many people are prone to believe all that they read in the newspapers and the magazines, and until the readers become better informed the abuse has a malignant effect. And so these publications of the muck-raker Callender so poisoned the mind of William Cullen Bryant, then a mere lad of 14 years, that this youth published The Embargo; A Satire, a poem of 600 lines, against Mr. Jefferson, from which I quote the following:

Ye who rely on Jeffersonian skill,
And say that fancy paints ideal ill,
Go, on the wing of observation fly,
Cast o'er the land a scrutinizing eye;
States, counties, towns, remark with keen review,
Let facts convince, and own the picture true!
* * * *
When shall this land, some courteous angel say,
Throw off a weak and erring ruler's sway?
Rise, injured people, vindicate your cause,
And prove your love of liberty and laws!
Oh, wrest, sole refuge of a sinking land,
The scepter from the slave's imbecile hand!
Oh, ne'er consent obsequious to advance,
The willing vassal of imperious France!
Correct that suffrage you misused before,
And lift your voice above a Congress roar;
And thou, the scorn of every patriot's name,
Thy country's ruin, and her councils shame!
Poor servile thing! derision of the brave!
Who erst from Tarlton fled to Carter's cave;
Thou who, when menaced by perfidious Gaul,
Didst prostrate to her whiskered minion fall;
And when our cash, her empty bags supplied,
Didst meanly strive the foul disgrace to hide,
Go, wretch, resign the presidential chair,
Disclose thy secret measures, foul or fair.
Go, search with curious eyes for horned frogs,
'Mid the wild wastes of Louisianian bogs,
Or, where Ohio rolls his turbid stream,
Dig for huge bones, thy glory and thy theme;
Go scan, philosophist, thy * * * * * * * charms,
And sink supinely in her sable arms;
But quit to abler hands the helm of State,
Nor image ruin on thy country's fate.

At a later period the great Irish poet, Tom Moore, visited the United States and heard all this slander rehearsed. He, too, believed it gospel truth, and in consequence he wrote the following stanza:

> The patriot, fresh from freedom's councils come,
> Now pleased, retires to lash his slaves at home,
> Or woo, perhaps, some black Aspasia's charms,
> And dream of freedom in his bondmaid's arms.

And in order that the reader might not mistake the reference the poet adds a footnote to tell him that President Jefferson was the patriot intended to be described. [Laughter.] And just as the muck-rakers of the Washington administration uttered pæans of joy upon his retirement, so the muck-rakers of the Jefferson administration shouted their hosannahs upon the retirement from the Presidency of the writer of the immortal Declaration of Independence. Listen to this broadside:

> At home, agriculture, manufactures, the fisheries, navigation, and commerce were encouraged and extended. The credit of the Nation was revived, its capital enlarged, and its revenues established, the public arsenals were replenished, a naval force created, and the American name upheld and revered throughout the world.
>
> Such is the exact picture of our situation when Mr. Jefferson came into office. What is the state of the country now, as it passes out of his hands? Why this—this is Mr. Jefferson's work:
>
> Our agriculture discouraged.
> Our fisheries abandoned.
> Our navigation forbidden.
> Our commerce at home restrained if not annihilated.
> Our commerce abroad cut off.
> Our navy sold, dismantled, or degraded to the service of cutters and gunboats.
> The revenue extinguished.
> The course of justice interrupted.
> The military power exalted above the civil.
>
> And by setting up a standard of political faith unknown to the Constitution the nation weakened by internal animosities and division at the moment when it is unnecessarily and improvidently exposed to war with Great Britain, France, and Spain.
>
> So great a change accomplished in so short a time is unexampled in the history of weak and unfaithful administrations, and can have proceeded only from the want of that capacity, integrity, and prudence without which no government can long preserve the prosperity or the confidence of the country.

I dare say that when these lines were written they created impressions among the American people not unlike the impressions that the muck-raker of to-day is trying to create against men high in public station. [Applause.] But as we scan the life of Thomas Jefferson to-day, Republicans and Democrats, Populists and Socialists, regulars and insurgents, none recall the attacks that helped to embitter his life at the time that they were made, but we will never forget that he is the author of the Declaration of Independence, that he is the founder of the University of Virginia, and that it was due to his wisdom, foresight, and sagaciousness that the purchase of the extensive and fertile Louisiana territory was accomplished. [Applause.]

In the presidential election of 1824 none of the candidates had a clear majority in the electoral college, and the contest was decided in the House of Representatives by the election of John Quincy Adams. As soon as he had been inaugurated he selected his Cabinet and made Henry Clay his Secretary of State. Clay had also been a candidate, but his followers threw their strength to Adams and against Andrew Jackson, thereby insuring the defeat of "Old Hickory." Immediately the opposition newspapers declared that a corrupt deal had been entered into between Adams and Clay, and that in consideration of his assistance to the former the latter was made Secretary of State. There were denials and countercharges, criminations and recriminations in the papers, in pamphlets, and in the forum all through the administration of John Quincy Adams. There are a number of volumes of pamphlets in the Congressional Library that were published during the campaign of 1828, and their perusal at this late day causes one to marvel at their virulence and their vindictiveness.

In addition to much personal and political abuse, a vile charge was published against the President, and I quote from Volume VII of his Memoirs, in which he tells the muck-rake story in his own way:

> 30th. Mr. Everett called to make inquiries concerning an infamous calumny upon me contained in a note to an electioneering life of General Jackson, published by Isaac Hill, editor of a newspaper in New Hampshire. It is that, while in Russia, I attempted to make use of a beautiful girl to seduce the passions of the Emperor Alexander and sway him to political purposes. This is a new form of slander—one of the thousand malicious lies which outvenom all the worms of Nile, and are circulated in every part of the country in newspapers and pamphlets.
>
> I told Mr. Everett the incident upon which this tale was raised; that when we went to Russia a very beautiful girl, a native of Boston, named Martha Godfrey, went with us as chambermaid to my wife and nurse to our son Charles, then a child 2 years old. Soon

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after our arrival at St. Petersburg, Martha wrote a letter, perhaps to her mother, relating stories that she had heard there of the Emperor's amours and gallantries. This letter, having been sent to the post-office, was, according to the custom there, opened and sent as a curiosity to the Emperor, who was diverted with it and showed it to the Empress. They both felt a curiosity to see the girl who had written this letter, and some of the ladies of the court, who had visited Mrs. Adams, having seen Charles with his nurse, had spoken to the Empress of both in such manner as still further to excite her curiosity. The Empress than had a sister living with her, the Princess Amelia of Baden. She expressed a wish to see Charles, and he was sent one morning to her apartment in the palace. Martha, his nurse, went with him, and while they were in the princess's apartment the Emperor and Empress both went there and passed perhaps ten minutes in talking with the child, and at the same time they had an opportunity of seeing the nurse whose letter had afforded them some amusement. It is from this trivial incident that this base calumny has been trumped up. There never was any other foundation for it. Martha Godfrey was a girl of irreproachable conduct. She returned to the United States with Mrs. Smith, married a very respectable musical-instrument maker in Boston, and died there within the last three or four years.

Later on in his memoirs he again refers to this matter:

Mr. Clay had a note verbale from the Russian minister, Baron Krudener, complaining of the slander upon the memory of the Emperor Alexander in the pamphlet noticed by Mr. Everett, and inquiring if there were no means of obtaining reparation for it. I advised Mr. Clay to see the baron and say to him that there was no remedy against such libels in this country but contempt; but to observe that in this particular instance the calumny upon the Emperor Alexander was slight and evidently used only as inducements to the infamous imputations upon me and my wife.

But fortunately there came a day of reckoning for the muck-raker Hill. President Jackson nominated him for the position of Second Comptroller of the Treasury, but the Senate, by a vote of 33 to 15, every Senator being present, refused to ratify his nomination, and no secret was made of the fact that confirmation was refused by reason of his attacks on President and Mrs. Adams in his newspaper, the New Hampshire Patriot.

And oh, how the newspapers and pamphleteers grilled that other pride of Democracy, Andrew Jackson. [Laughter.] During this campaign of 1828 he was called a murderer, an adulterer, a traitor, an ignoramus, a fool, a crook back, a pretender, and so forth. Let me quote a few excerpts from the pens of the muck rakers of the Jackson period. This is from the Richmond Enquirer:

We can not consent to lend a hand toward the election of such a man as General Jackson. He is too little of a statesman, too rash, too violent in his temper; his measures too much inclined to arbitrary government to obtain the humble support of the editors of this paper. We could deprecate his election as a cross upon our country.

And harken unto this blast from the New York Evening Post:

General Jackson, from the moment he was intrusted with command, has avowedly and systematically made his own will and pleasure the sole rule and guide of all his actions. He has suspended the executive, legislative, and judicial functions with military sway. He has insulted the Executive of the United States; spurned its authority, disregarded and transcended its orders. He has usurped the high prerogative of peace and war, intrusted by all nations to the sovereign power of the State, and by our own Constitution to Congress alone. He has broken the known law of nations, and promulgated a new code of his own, conceived in madness or folly, and written in blood. He has, in fine, violated all laws, human and divine.

[Laughter.]

During this bitter political contest a new form of periodical, known as campaign papers, was started. The most virulent were two, christened, respectively, "We, the People," and the "Anti-Jackson Expositor." The President's wife, and even his mother, became the subject of attacks.

In Philadelphia one John Binns issued a series of handbills, each bearing the outline of a coffin lid, upon which was printed an inscription, one of which I will quote to you:

This marble cell contains the moldering remains of the gallant David Hunt. He was the son of a soldier of the Revolution, a volunteer in the Creek war.

He faithfully served his country until his tour of duty had expired, when he left the camp and returned to the home of his brave parent, where, learning that his tour of duty had possibly not expired, he returned to camp and to his duty, the veteran father saying, "Go, my son; I am sure no harm can come to you; I, too, have been a soldier, and under Washington, a soldier returning to duty which he had left in error always found mercy." But the son nevermore saw the face of his venerable father. He was arrested, tried, and shot to death at four days' notice, by order of Gen. Andrew Jackson, on the 21st of February, 1815.

The militia of his native State erected this simple slab to his memory on the 4th of July, 1828.

Oh, my friends of the Democratic minority, I join with you in reprobating this product of the muck-rakers' pen on your idol and the idol of the American people during his lifetime. But did the assaults of the muck-rakers tarnish Andrew Jackson's fame? Not one jot. Nor will the onslaughts of the muck-

rakers of the present tarnish the fair fame of those in high station to-day who are the targets for equally villainous abuse. [Applause.] So do not lay the flattering unction to your souls that because a few magazines and periodicals are at this time trying to fool the American people they will be successful. Long before the bleak November days shall have come the people will have seen the light of truth. That majority which you so confidently hope for will not materialize this year.

As the immortal Lincoln said:

> You may fool some of the people some of the time; you may fool some of the people all of the time; but you can not fool all of the people all of the time.

[Applause on the Republican side.]

And the muck-raking allies of your Democratic newspapers are trying to fool all of the people all the time. [Applause on the Republican side.] The immortal Lincoln! What a world of emotion that name conjures up. No wonder all of his biographers speak of the sad expression of his countenance. Was ever mortal man so villified, so abused, so traduced, so defamed as he was in his lifetime? He was ridiculed, reviled, and lampooned as no other man in our country's history. Gibes and jeers and sneers were his daily portion in the newspapers of this country, and even in some that were published abroad, during the whole civil war. "The baboon at the other end of the Avenue" and "That damned idiot in the White House" were some of the expletives applied to him by the muck-rakers of his day.

Mr. Lincoln was so outraged by the obloquies, so stung by the disparagements, his existence was rendered so unhappy, that his life became almost a burden to him. Lamon, his lifelong friend, says that one day he went to the President's office and found him lying on the sofa, greatly distressed. Jumping to his feet, he said:

> You know, Lamon, better than any living man that from boyhood up my ambition was to be President; but look at me. I wish I had never been born! I had rather be dead than as President be thus abused in the house of my friends.

One delegate at Chicago declared that for less offenses than Mr. Lincoln had been guilty of the English people had chopped off the head of the first Charles. Another arose and asserted that—

> Ever since that usurper, traitor, and tyrant has occupied the presidential chair the party has shouted "War to the knife, and the knife to the hilt!" Blood has flowed in torrents and yet the thirst of the old monster is not quenched. His cry is for more blood.

But why continue the recital of the calumnies, the insinuations, the half truths, and the downright lies that were printed in abuse of the great emancipator?

The muck-rakers who made his life miserable are nearly all rotting in forgotten graves. But the name of Lincoln will shine resplendent through all the ages. As long as the universe shall endure he will tower, giant-like, above the mere pygmies that hurled their scurrility at him, and the story of his life will prove an inspiration to millions of Americans in the generations yet to come. [Applause.]

Mr. Chairman, I could speak at great length of the abusive attacks that have appeared in the newspapers and the magazines of this country against Grant, and Garfield, and Cleveland, and McKinley, aye, and against Theodore Roosevelt. They had their detractors, their defamers. But their fame rests secure in the hearts of their countrymen. And while they all undoubtedly felt the injustice of the poignant shafts of abuse that were hurled against them by the muck-rakers of their respective periods, who to-day cares or even halfway remembers what was the nature or the character of the malicious onslaughts?

And so, my colleagues, we, too, can draw this moral from the lessons taught us by that fact: "To-day's newspapers are lost in starting to-morrow's fires." [Applause.]

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